Polly Cody

Interviewer: Peggy Gardner & Mary Parker

February 6, 2001

Side A

Mary Parker (MP): Our particular interest today is the Chunns Cove Camp for Girls which was located just over the mountain from my home in Asheville to which I went in 1924 and '25 and Polly was there –

Polly Cody (PC): From 1932 to '37 –

MP: Because you stayed to become a counselor. Right?

PC: Yes. I ended up being program director which was a tough job.

MP: You were obviously a better camper than I was. I was a mousy type and never particularly good at sports. Actually, I suppose I was popular with the counselors because I was so docile. I don't know that I contributed much and I never could have been a program director. Did you have any influence the camp uniforms? When I went we wore pleated serge bloomers.

PC: Right. Pleated. And white tops.

MP: And white knitty tops.

PC: Knitty tops.

MP: Excellent quality.

PC: And on Sundays though you changed to white pleated bloomers.

Peggy Gardner (PG): Oh my goodness. Do you think these were made locally? Would they be Biltmore homespun?

MP: No, no, no. But they were big business. And M.V. Moore, which was a specialty apparel shop of great quality on Patton Avenue, during my camp time, had the franchise, so they had this built in business selling – you had a list from the camp of what you should bring -

PC: For hiking, for Sundays, for special occasions.

PG: Did you buy yours – you were from Ohio – did you buy yours at home?

PC: I was from Shaker Heights, Cleveland Ohio. The reason I went to camp is because my folks had a place at Chautauqua Lake and they wanted me to stay and spend my summers there. And I said "No, I wanted to be with girls." I was 14, and they bought a canoe hoping that would bribe me to stay and I said no. I ended up with Marge Cass Danforth, whose mother was actually recruiting for Camp Boulder Point and Chunns Cove.

MP: And the Alices who ran Chunns Cove were originally from Ohio, and the girls camp business in Western North Carolina was big in general too. Chunns Cove was not the largest, but it was really quite special. In the wintertime, the recruiting – I don't know exactly how that went on, but didn't they have parties for mothers and daughters?

PC: Everywhere. They had New Orleans, Birmingham, Greenville and then in Ohio, Cincinnati, Cleveland and all around the Alices traveled together to these parties. They were just like tea parties, very proper. In fact, having tea with Mrs. Alice in her home used to be one of the highlights for us.

PG: At the camp?

PC: At the camp.

MP: We were little ladies.

PC: She handled it like a prep school head teacher.

MP: Exactly.

PG: Did you go there often?

PC: Oh just once during a session I imagine.

MP: It was before the day of superhighways, it wasn't before the day of automobiles but it was before the proliferation of automobiles. The girls from Ohio came on the Southern Railway –

*(100)*PC: Right. They got on in Cleveland, they changed in Cincinnati and came in on the Southern Railway, into the Depot –

MP: In a special car, I think.

PC: Yes we had a special car. We had a special car for just the particular campers.

PG: All going to one camp? Or just coming to Western North Carolina?

PC: I think it was all the Ohio girls put together in one car.

MP: And probably for Chunns Cove. But that may have been a regular thing. There were much larger camps in Transylvania County, so it probably was pretty well organized big business.

PC: Of course it was. There were many many camps everywhere in the camping climates. Which were the South of course, in Pennsylvania and New England – those were strong places for people to send their kids to camp.

PG: Chautauqua is New York right?

PC: That's right. Hy (?) and I still go there in the summer.

MP: It was quite a regimented life. As I remember there was a program for the day posted and you were assigned to a group, and you did certain things between given hours. You rested, particularly if you were as I was an always on the junior hill. The big girls, who were 12 and older, were in the cabins, were on the opposite hillside. They were pretty grown-up and glamorous.

PC: You also though, you made your bed just so. You swept out the cabin just so. You had real strict rules for that.

PG: And you were a counselor?

PC: I was a counselor after the first 2 years. I was first a junior counselor and then I had this program job. And I used to pray it wouldn't rain. If it rained I had to think up skits and all sorts of things.

MP: Things for all those terrible little girls to do.

PC: That's right. Track was one of the things we did, high jumping and broad jumping and I wrote home and said I was a complete failure - I couldn't do that and Mother wrote back and said "Don't worry about the jumping. Jumping doesn't figure much in one's life."

PG: Good advice.

MP: At Chunns Cove there was a quote "lake" known as Lake Little. It really was stretching matters to call it anything more than a pond, but there was space for a canoe.

PC: We used to bob on the ends of canoes – did you do that ever? You stood with your feet on the back of the canoe sides and bobbed it to make it go. We'd have little contests – at least with the group I was with - to see who could make a canoe go faster by standing on the ends.

MP: And there was almost nowhere for it to go.

PC: We learned to dive, we did some diving.

MP: It was I guess, fed by a stream from up the mountain there. I do remember they must have had their own wells and pumps because it was during the years when Asheville had terrible droughts. The Bee Tree reservoir has not been built – I guess it was the Bee Tree, or North Fork – anyway there was an awful water shortage and my mother came over several times, even while I was in camp, to fill big canisters of water because there was very good spring water there.

PC: Of course Uncle Fud taught us were all the springs were.

MP: And Uncle Fud – who did we encounter? Was it Jimmy Westall? Who did remember about ...

PC: Who was very old for the time – now we've been here 20 years. That was when I first came down, and I said to Connie Ambler, who was our real estate person "The only person I know here is Dorothy Smith." And she said "There's no Dorothy Smith here." And it was Dorothy Word and I went over to see her and I actually have a picture of Ginger when she was just little.

MP: The famous woodsman who – I'm not sure whether he also – no I know now. Corbitt Alexander (?) had the horses – Uncle Fud was really Edward Duke, was the person who lead us on hikes and presumably was there –

PC: Taught us mountain skills really –

MP: And we wrote songs about him. Remember "My name is Mr. Edward Duke, The camp (unintelligible), the girls all call me Uncle Fud –

PC: "Just why I don't understand. I lead the mountain paths, I teach them the mountain lore.."

MP: "No matter how many tales I spin.."

PC: "They always ask for more."

PG: That was great!

MP: "Oh Mr. Edward Duke, oh Uncle Fud, we'll follow you through dusty trails and mud, tra-la tra-la.."

PC: Doesn't this sound old fashioned to you?

PG: I love it.

(200) PC: Do you want to see any of the pictures? We've got Uncle Fud here – a beautiful one of him.

PG: We should look at the pictures. I took the ones out of our files too.

PC: We've got Uncle Fud – a beautiful one of him in here.

MP: Uncle Fud also they made something that I had never tasted – which was wildcat stew. Actually it was corned beef hash. But we had never had corned beef hash at my house.

PC: It wasn't Brunswick Stew? Now that's what Dorothy Word would bring over.

MP: Then she added to the menu.

PC: Here we are on a horseback trip.

PG: So you'd go on these expeditions – you'd go camping right? Overnight trips?

MP: Yes we went on overnight hikes. Occasionally they started out in a bus. I remember going to a mountain down towards Hickory Nut Gap called Little Pisgah. We were delivered in a truck.

PC: Here's Allen (?) cave where people still hike today.

PG: We have on one of our pictures in reference "To Ogle's" – do you think you went to Ogle Meadows?

MP: Oh Ogle Meadows – you know where that is. That was one of Tony's favorites. I don't think we went to Ogle Meadows.

PC: This the way we got ready for a hike.

PG: Where you on horseback? Or the horses would carry your gear?

PC: Sometimes we had particular horseback trips, but every week mostly a trip to a different hiking spot.

MP: Right. An overnight. I remember one time when it was cold and we slept in ponchos with an army blanket inside and of course, in all our clothes flat on the ground.

PC: And big pins that held the blanket together.

MP: Blanket pins.

PC: I still have a blanket pin. I'll bring it in and show it to you.

MP: That's quite an artifact.

PC: It is. I don't think I've ever seen one. Here's Uncle Fud.

MP: I thought he was really old. He doesn't look so old. Well, he looks kind of timeless.

PG: Now this would have been before the Blue Ridge Parkway?

MP: Oh yes. The road up to – Mountain Meadows was there?

PG: Was Mountain Meadows a camp also?

MP: No, Mountain Meadows was an Inn but I remember when we hiked past there to our Sunday hike – we went on a Sunday hike and had Sunday dinner up on the mountain. Mr. Huns-? Carry? (?)– who owned Mountain Meadows was having brunch, must have been on the porch. He was a friend of my family, so I felt very set up because he recognized me and greeted me as we hiked past.

PC: How old were you then?

MP: Ten. I was a most unlike candidate for a summer camp but Dad and Mr. George Stevens had decided it was a good idea for their little girls.

PG: It's a great idea, I think.

PC: Here are the Alices. You can see how old fashioned they look. Properly dressed – she never would have liked pants, I'm sure.

MP: When I was there Sunday afternoon was spent – either people were supposed to write home or your wrote for the campfire that night – you wrote for the log. And people wrote songs – camp words to the tune of popular songs.

PG: I wonder what happened to those logs?

PC: I think I can find one perhaps.

PG: That would be wonderful.

PC: I used to enjoy – Mr. Alice inspired people to write.

PG: Where these your own private journals you were encouraged to keep? Or did they keep one at the camp?

PC: Or write poems – we were great at writing poems?

MP: And they got read after supper on Sunday night. I remember "There's a camp we love so well in Dixieland" to the tune of "Let me call you Sweetheart." "To it we'll 'ere be something true" or loyal than – "In the future we will hold, memories of the blue and gold," I think all camps had blue and gold for colors. "In our hearts you'll ne'er grow dear Chunns Cove."

PC: We didn't sing that one. Here we are – and I'm in that one - going on a horseback ride with Mr. Corbitt Alexander who brought out the horses from Pinehurst. And we had wonderful horses. Having been on horseback since I would say they were a cut above....

MP: That is wonderful. The highlight of my horseback riding career was – we came over the mountain – over Sunset downtown, and what is now Griffin Boulevard and the far end of Kimberly had just been bulldozed in preparation for building streets and house. We galloped – I felt that

there were 8 abreast, maybe it was 6 – up that wide swath that had been cut for Griffin Boulevard and it was the only time I ever – most of my horseback riding was with 1 or 2 people and on trails – but to race up that, it was intoxicating, it was wonderful!

PC: Did you see Corbitt Alexander before he died?

MP: I saw him in the '60's probably, at some time.

PC: Because I got here too late to see him and I was so disappointed. He used to sing as we went along riding together – risqué songs – I don't think we knew how risqué they were.

*(300)*MP: He was a very colorful character. He was one of the Alexanders near Warren Wilson.

PG: Did he just come with the horses and do that at the camp or was he connected in other ways?

MP: No, his thing was horses.

PC: Just horses.

MP: He may have – probably did it for other camps too.

PC: He probably did. He was so well known and married a horsewoman finally – he was a bachelor his whole life and finally he married Sally, I can't think of her name – I've seen her at the health care center at Highland Farms. Sally Ellington.

MP: She still there?

PC: She's still there. Can't believe it. Here is Whiteford Smith.

MP: Oh for goodness sake – now this was after my day.

PC: You shouldn't talk about that because he committed suicide.

PG: You have all the names on the back of that picture.

MP: Oh aren't you wonderful! When I was there, there were a lot of girls from Winston-Salem. The Haynes, Claire and Rosalie –

PC: Was the counselor – red-haired counselor Peg Haynes – was she there?

MP: She may have been there.

PC: And Penda Major (?) from Clemson, North Carolina was the swimming person. And she was colorful.

MP: Actually those are pretty practical hiking britches.

PG: Very sturdy.

PC: And we had our berets and we were not supposed to sing going thru the tunnel. That was a rule, that you were silent going thru the tunnel.

MP: See the tunnel had not been built when I was at Chunns Cove.

PC: We just barely had it. And you know a typical scene for us there in Chunns Cove, was seeing walking down the road the mountaineer father, the kids after him, going into Asheville for supplies or something, and at the very end, the mountaineer mother. It was so obvious, to me that made a terrible impression to think that women were ...

MP: Bringing up the end of the parade?

PC: Here shows a complete picture and I think that must be Corbin. I don't know who the nurse was – maybe you do.

MP: Nope.

PC: We always had a nurse on campus.

MP: You have on shorts. Bermuda shorts.

PC: I guess by that time maybe we were allowed – we must have been allowed to have them by that time.

PG: Polly I have a question about this one. It shows you I believe and another girl with a beret. You have little signs that say CCC pills.

PC: Marge Casstanford (?) . There was something advertised by Pillsbury or something - in a bag and we were dressed up like the pills in the bag. I cannot to this day – maybe you would remember –

MP: No – but aren't you attractive? I think that's wonderful. But that predated the Pillsbury doughboy.

PG: Would that have to do with the Civilian Conservation Corps – the CCC.

MP: No, because that hadn't started yet.

PC: Marge may remember – I still talk to Marge because her husband is very ill. She's in Hudson Ohio. I'm going to ask her because she said – "Polly do you have a picture of us as.." I forgot. It was a skit you see, or a contest to see who had the best...

PG: I'm sure you must be putting up a tent or something.

PC: There we're making a woodland chapel. I had the idea that we ought to have a little woodland chapel to go and meditate in. I was very deeply religious and I was active in the New England Student Christian Movement. So there we are building it and all getting poison ivy.

MP: I think that those are long stocking even though you have on –

PC: Maybe to protect from the poison ivy, who knows?

MP: Not a bad idea.

PG: Was there any church affiliation at the camp?

PC: No. What was church was the atmosphere on Sunday which was different. And Mr. Alice who inspired you to do this writing. He read Stevenson's – what was his favorite thing to quote? I have to look at my Bartletts – some famous poem – every Sunday I think he read the same one to strike his muse of poetry writing –

MP: It was interesting because we kept the Sabbath day. It was very definitely a different day with a different tempo a different tone. I'm sure – I don't remember what it was – but I'm sure there was always a grace before a meal. I don't remember, but I know you didn't just rush in and start eating.

PC: There was complete order. It there was anything about this camp it was complete order.

MP: That's what's so funny because one of the lines of that song was "Back to dear old Chunns Cove, back to live in freedom as we used to do." Well I had never been so regimented as I was at Chunns Cove.

PC: You see your cabin leader set the tone. I had three girls – here I have them somewhere here – here I'm ready to go horseback riding. Now, here is Ginger Smith Word's little daughter. That's Ginger – you probably know some of those there.

MP: Well I don't recognize them over the years. That's another thing – we wore midi blouses and there were yard, or 40 inch square silk ties. But we rolled them into tight little strips and then you pinned them sort of down on your navel.

PG: Did you use the scarves for anything other than just part of your uniform?

PC: No those were the days of uniforms. It's all changing now. Even military schools don't have uniforms.

MP: These are wonderful.

PG: These are great pictures.

PC: Now there's one of the junior hill girls. This is Jane Stillwell from Cleveland.

MP: I think you had more style than we did in my day.

PG: She was in the senior camp.

*(400)*PC: I love this. I had such a time. Mary I wish I had bumped into you earlier when I came, because everywhere I went, every party, every meeting, I said – "Does anybody know Uncle Fud?" See I didn't know his name – Mr. Edward Duke – that Mr. Westall finally said "I know." He was a baseball player. He hung around Pack Square during the winter. he did have a job. We would have called him sort of a hobo or bum.

MP: Well he wasn't exactly because was self-sufficient and his sister – one of them might have even been a principal of a school.

PC: Or teacher at least.

MP: They were teachers. They were, as much as any of us, indigenous mountaineers – an old family that had been here a long time.

PC: Pearson Avenue is where they lived. That's in Montford.

MP: Probably he was just plain – before the days of free spirits –

PC: He was a free spirit.

MP: In those days most people thought that when you were grown up you had a regular job throughout the year. But he had a special talent.

PC: He did what he wanted to do and he hung around very close to the cigar store. I never saw him smoke, I don't think he did probably his sister wouldn't let him.

PG: You're talking about the Pack Square cigar store?

MP: The one up on the corner. Well that's interesting too because Sophie Stevens with whom, because of whom – I went to camp and I had our earliest adventures of smoking cigarettes but it definitely was a year or so after Chunns Cove camp. We smoked something called Q-babs (?), They were menthol –

PG: Sounds dangerous Mary.

MP: That's about the story of my life. That's about at daring as we would be. That's kind of interesting – there wasn't any sort of mischief on our whole side of the hill.

PG: There was too much to do.

PC: And the Alices' were so strict. I'm sure if any little incident happened at Camp that was untoward, I'm sure Mrs. Alice brought that girl into her home, and she sat down in her living room and talked it over and I'm sure that nothing could go any further.

PG: You talked about walking through the tunnel. Would you go downtown from the camp?

PC: The tunnel had just been built.

MP: But did you walk?

PC: No.

MP: No, you went in a truck. The tunnel was about 1928 that the tunnel was built.

PG: But you remember walking over the mountain to go to your house?

MP: Oh yes. Well it's quite close – Vance Gap. And when we were small – living where I do – we played on the mountain side where there were very few houses. There was the Henry's house –

PC: And you see no cut – it gives you a different feeling for distances.

MP: There was the road over Vance Gap. It went through Chunns Cove camp.

PC: Yes and our mountaineer friends you see, who walked that every single day, that family. They just went up over the same place.

PG: You think they were going toward town?

MP: Go shopping.

PG: Or sell something?

PC: I'm sure that's what they did every single day, it seemed to me. On our overnight hikes, all of us fell in love with the mountaineer guide who helped with the meals and lugging things around.

MP: I guess he was a different one.

PC: Clyde the name of the one – and we all, you know –

MP: Had a crush on Clyde?

PC: And when we went to the bathroom, we looked around to be sure Clyde wasn't watching us.

PG: I had those two pictures that showed an overview, I thought, of the camp.

PC: That's nice because it shows the little house. Perry Alexander, the construction man, bought that house, put in a pool - this is very nice for perspective.

MP: You can see the little cabins. That's junior hill, the senior –

PC: Junior hill would have been up here –

(Cross talk)

PF: That's a good picture. Where did you get these?

PG: These are in our files here at the library.

PC: You can have any of these you want. In fact, Hy was going to get them this morning if he could. We can get any that you'd like to have and give them to you.

PG: Well we'd love them.

MP: Especially with you here to put dates and –

PC: I didn't put dates nearly enough.

PG: These are some pretty early pictures I think. It shows the springhouse. Do you remember that spring house?

MP: Oh absolutely!

PC: Oh yes, yes it had a trumpet vine or ivy or something that went over it.

MP: And that was the springhouse and that's were mother came and filled drinking water things during the drought in '24.

PC: I'm trying to figure out what kind of clothes these girls had on.

PG: I think they're in some kind of skit or something.

PC: That must be a skit - it must be a drama.

MP: Let me see, obviously, yes because here's a witch. Don't you think it's Hansel and Gretel?

PC: Maybe so. Good for you for seeing that witch. That witch fits in so well. I can get you any of these pictures that will help you – especially the ones that have Corbitt and the Alices.

MP: And Uncle Fud.

PC: And Uncle Fud.

MP: You need to put identifications on them.

PC: I was looking at how there was less ozone and so forth. There you can see those ranges.

PG: You have good pictures of the mountains – crystal clear. I hope we'll have those again someday soon. This was another Barnhill photo that shows a close up on a tree that must have been pretty important.

PC: The willow tree. This is where we ate watermelon and spit the seeds. We tried to hit the tree when we spit the seeds out. That was a Sunday thing we could do was have watermelon. This shows you what good horses we had, Look at those horses. You don't see horses like that today at these places that rent them.

PG: Now we have these small pictures of the lake, I guess.

PC: Oh dear, the lake. That was a pond.

MP: But it was named Lake Little.

PC: Penda's lake.

PG: Now it who was Penda?

PC: Penda Major was a South Carolina woman who taught school and who ran all the waterfront stuff for years. She came back every single year.

PG: She was in charge of the lake.

PC: Now horse camp was opened and closed – it closed in about 1940, didn't it?

MP: That I don't know.

PC: I think so - '40. Robin tried to get me to come back and help with the program. My mother was wise. She said "I think things are not stable with this." The Alices were turning it over to Robin Cook.

MP: I completely lost touch.

PG: You just went in the twenties, right?

MP: I had gone 2 years in the twenties. And then only marginally I knew that Dot Word, Dot Smith had been there, but I knew very little about it. I was too preoccupied with assorted other things.

PC: Dot Smith is the one who married Strauss –

MP: No – Word.

PC: Well then after Word she married Strauss. The one who went to Europe, took her to Europe. That was wonderful after Whiteford's death that she had these – and he took her to Europe when he was making cigarette paper for tobacco, for cigarettes – that probably doesn't need to be in –

*(500)*PG: That's all right. We always have some extra things on the tape. This shows the dining hall.

PC: There I am.

PG: That's a good picture of you. Now what building are you outside of here?

PC: The arts and crafts building was right along here. That's a nice building. That's where we hammered out jewelry.

MP: Yes we made things, like Stuart Nye type things.

PG: Do you still have any of them?

PC: We cut things –

MP: Remember cutting around things? You either used silver or copper.

PC: I have a copper bracelet I think, still that I made.

PG: Did you do any pottery?

MP: I don't remember any kiln.

PC: I don't they would have afforded one. The Alices were really frugal people. We had grits every morning for breakfast.

MP: I'm sure we did. I wouldn't even have noticed because we always did at home. At home we had - only we called it hominy, but it's now know as grits – we had that even if we had oatmeal. So if I had it at camp that just seemed routine.

PC: To me that was something very unusual, not having had it at home.

MP; The interesting thing is I don't remember too much about food, or whether we thought it was good or bad –

PC: I remember thinking about where people were from – if they had a southern accent or if they talked about things we didn't understand. We fought the Civil War every summer – some of us.

MP: That would very well be, My opinion – my concept of Ohio was that is the Midwest. I thought it was almost as far west as you could go. At Grove Park School for Girls there were several teachers who were from Ohio.

PC: You went to Grove Park School for Girls? Where was that located?

MP: It was at the top of Edgemont, where something now called the Albemarle Inn. That road from Edgemont up to Macon had not been built, or those particular houses or even the apartment house that's just there. That house, which was a rather pretentious handsome – had been built as a private home by Dr. Carl Reynolds, was I guess the first thing in that part of Grove Park. It was a boarding school, but mostly a day school.

PC: Now tell me, what about the public schools then.

MP: The public schools were fine, except right after World War I, our family felt that they weren't quite what they should be. Which is why my brother Haywood went to the Asheville School in 1918 and we started out at Orange Street School. Mother was very active with the PTA and my brother Frank stayed with public schools all the way through and ended up the best educated and the best of all of us. My older sisters Martha and Francis went to Vassafern (?) and had the same kind of discipline, training Miss Kate Shipp was bringing up ladies.

PC: Finishing school style.

MP: And we went to the Grove Park School for Girls, which by the beginning of 1925 was sort of beginning to be on hard times. Partly because of the 9th grade having defected – two of the teachers and two-thirds of the ninth grade took off for a year in Europe. So that was a blow to the Grove Park School –but we digress. That was because the Grove Park School had some of those Mid-westerners in Ohio teaching.

PG: But the summers here were chilly at night. Was it a lot different from Ohio?

PC: Yes and almost every day during the rest hour – which was kind of a nap time – we would have a shower. I remember having showers at regular intervals. Whether that's because I grew up – I think the weather has changed here greatly.

PG: I remember that too – not that far back.

PC: The weather has changed here greatly. The frigid temperatures – that's pretty unusual.

PG: I don't remember like that either. I just remember the summers being so different. They were it seemed more lush and chillier and a lot more rain.

PC: Speaking of girl's schools, our son who is in New York, sends his kids to Chapin and to Spence – he loves, loves girl's schools. He said "No more problems. Everything is orderly again." Order seems to be –

MP: Do they, in this day and time, do they wear uniforms?

PC: Oh yes, yes indeed.

PG: It's come back in vogue a little I think.

PC: There's coming back. I think probably, the fact that Asheville School can keep coat and tie going. I'm amazed at that. A lot of private schools wouldn't be able to do that. Kids would rebel.

MP: This is wonderful – do we need to sort these out?

PG: Mine are in the shelves – but Polly we would love to have any that you'd like to give to us and we –

PC: Because some of these Hy could put on one page.

MP: You mean make copies? But they should be labeled.

PG: I had a question because I'm studying photographers and one of these pictures has a note from a photographer to you on the back. From Juanita Wilson – do you remember her? It says "Polly Jacoby" – was that your maiden name? – "a present from Juanita Wilson 7-13-1938."

PC: What happened is that probably came in the mail after she left. Because I'm still getting pictures of Chunns Cove Camp. People who I keep up with.

MP: I think you're wonderful Polly. I think a lot of people sent Juanita –

PG: She might have been doing this as a business. She's one of the photographers in our collection.

MP: Yes she did work for me when I was in the advertising business. She was a local commercial photographer. I'm surprised at the time.

PG: 1938? On the back the stamp on the back says "Wilson Studio at the Arcade" – and that was her father. She was early on in her career, but I guess she was going to camps and taking pictures and hoping to sell them.

PC: Sure. I still get things at Christmastime from people who – at this age, you weed out things as much as you can and give them to people where it matters.

MP: I guess actually, I guess Juanita is, was – I think she died hasn't she?

PG: She did.

MP: She may have even been older than I am.

PG: I forget what year she was born Mary, but she started out pretty early working with her father.

MP: With her father, yeas.

PC: Here's Corbitt. And I'm standing behind him laughing for some reason. Corbitt Alexander

MP: He just looks amiable. Otherwise you can't -

PC: What does it say on the back?

MP: "Mr. Alex our jolly riding master showing Polly and Uncle Fud – " Uncle Fud's in the background.

PC: He must be there somewhere.

(cross talk)

MP: That's what I call rather ghostly –

PG: It's ghostly. It wasn't fixed properly. How long did you stay at the camp every summer.

MP & PC: Eight weeks.

PC: Eight weeks! That's a chorus.

PG: That's a long time.

PC: People did then. They stayed the whole time. They didn't go home in two weeks or four weeks.

MP: Nobody left on weekends.

PG: Would your parents visit you?

*(600)*PC: Yes they could come and take you to the Battery Park or the Grove Park Inn for dinner.

MP: I was had a spell of homesickness and poor Mother didn't know what to do about it. Anyway she came over and took me and we went to the Biltmore Country Club and had cinnamon toast with some visiting east Carolina relative that she was taking out to tea.

PG: Maybe she came to get water so often because you were so homesick.

MP: No that was – that wasn't really all that often, but she did come sometimes.

PG: So you remember going to the Grove Park Inn or the Battery Park with your parents?

PC: Oh yes. They took us – and sometimes we could invite a friend.

MP: Do you, like Jane Bingham, have any of your camp uniforms?

PC: I don't think I kept them.

MP: Jane wowed the crowd –

PC: And she has hats - she has a whole attic full of hats.

MP: She had her Rockbrook (?) uniform, and she wore them – this is 10 or 15 years ago – to a Preservation Society meeting that was in the Battery Park Hotel. And sang camp songs and did a strip tease and the camp clothes were so voluminous that she was fully dressed underneath them. She took off her midi blouse and took off these enormous bloomer –

PC: Oh I'd love to have seen that! I hope she has pictures.

MP: I wonder. She also told about how they – they were more adventurous than we. They paddled down the French Broad from somewhere up in Transylvania County.

PG: But you don't remember being in a canoe or anything?

MP: No. We didn't do anything that adventurous. She said her mother met them and took them to tea, but was so chagrined at these little girls in camp bloomers that she took them in the back door and smuggled them up I suppose a service elevator.

PG: I think they probably looked pretty neat.

MP: Well it wasn't Ms. Rowell's idea of how you went to tea.

PG: Where did you say this one was?

PC: Allum cave (?). And I have hiked with Marie and Henry Colton up there. They have a hiking group that does Mount Le (?) every year. In fact Asheville School, when Jack Ty(?) was headmaster, he did that with the graduating class. One day Marie and Henry called up Hy and said "One of our hiking group can't go – would you like to come?" and I said "Oh sure." Well this is a hike. Have you heard about it?

MP: You know Mary Bruce and Steve Woody and a whole group do it every year.

PG: Oh they're the ones - then that was their group. There's a place there where you hang on ropes along the sides. Oh dear. I said – and wasn't all the young doctors there who were along and who were carrying wine up for the evening dinner - they would come over to Hy and take something off his back so he could make it and keep going. So that's Allum Cave – that's halfway up Mount Le(?).

PG: That looks like a group of twenty of you would go.

PC: Yes.

PG: That's quite an expedition.

PC: I'll pick out the ones I think you would like.

MP: Just be sure you identify. As much as you can.

PC: This is what Hy's sister always tells him "Hy you sent me a lot of pictures and there's no date on these and there's no names." She gets so mad at him. So I'll have to see what I can do.

MP: That is a very– it's long after my time – but it's a very characteristic – that sort of –

PG: Classic picture. You can tell a lot about the uniforms from that. And you have the names on the back of that one.

PC: Yes that one I evidently put some on.

PG: Now here this talks about a term I saw on something else about the camp, but it said

END OF SIDE A

Side B

MP:...opens on the sides. And they were built so that you were pretty surely safe from rain.

PG: How many floors did they have? Just one level?

MP: Yes. One level and

PC: And steps that would lead up to it.

MP: How many people do you think? Six?

PC: Well I had my three girls are here somewhere that I had –

MP: Were their just four people in one?

PC: In that particular year but in other there had been more. That's not the one.

MP: 'Cause I think there were six in ours.

PG: You say on this picture they're up in here?

MP; Well it's these little things – where you see little roofs.

PC: There's my sister with her junior girls. You must know some of those.

MP: No see I'm – these people would have been toddlers in my day.

PC: It's got something on the back.

MP: I love this. Somebody's named Humpy.

PC: I'm looking for the one that shows the girls I had. We had girls from Greenville.

MP: There were girls from Atlanta, New Orleans –

PC: Atlanta was one of the stops. Those trains made stops at all those places.

MP: Those were – it was a big part of the economy.

PG: Was it expensive for your parents?

PC: I think it was expensive.

MP: It was expensive – see that was – when I was there everybody felt pretty affluent. Polly's times were not so affluent.

PC: I had a brother at Cornell and I don't know how my parents did it. That's Betsy with her – I think this is an Asheville girl there. I remember her as an Asheville girl – right there.

MP: Let me see if I can see her face.

PC: Here are my three girls.

PG: So they were all in your kiosk.

PC: Yes.

MP: There are saddle shoes on these girls – that dates you to you see. Our were strictly ankle high Keds – I don't even know that they were Keds –but for around the camp they were ankle high canvas shoes.

PG: Canvas or leather?

*(100)*MP: I think they were canvas. But then your boots for hiking were impressive.

PC: Heavy. Heavy soles.

MP: And you laced them up with leather thongs.

PG: How high did they go? To your knees?

MP: They came pretty well up the calf. Not all the way – I don't know. And we wore jodhpurs –

PC: You were dressed for riding too just the way you were dressed for hiking.

MP: That's right. It was serious.

PC: You had boots and if you didn't have boots you had to borrow them from somebody or buy them from somebody.

PG: Did you ride every day?

PC: Every other day.

MP: Two or three times a week. And different groups – you see – how many girls do you think were there?

PC: Well I thought 25 from the north and 25 from the south was pretty average.

MP: Maybe so – it seemed more to me, but you're probably right. Not everybody went riding. You were – I don't know if it was by the week, but you were part of a group and group A would go riding on Tuesdays and group B would be doing crafts.

PC: Corbin Alexander arranged all that.

MP: But he didn't take 25 girls at one time. He probably took eight or ten.

PC: If that many.

MP: Then you had your turn. That was – for my feeling – that was the best thing that happened. I loved that.

PC: The riding. That was fun. And he was so much fun. He had a wonderful sense of humor.

PG: Was he related to Perry Alexander?

MP: Yes – his uncle.

PC: Uncle – I think so.

MP: All those Alexanders – what's the name of the branch ?

PC: Chattahoochee?

MP: No that's different Alexanders. Those are quite different. These were from the area near Warren Wilson – there's a real –

PC: Bee Tree –

MP: It goes to Bee Tree. Then that back road from Bee Tree goes back.

PC: You know your geography of this place. I guess never really learned the geography very well.

MP: Well the Alexanders – Corbett, possibly his mother. There were several Alexander families around that part.

PC: I thought they were all related.

MP: No. Tom Alexander at Bee Tree – I mean Cattaloochee is different. And these, several of them in the generation of 1924 had big old houses which were very informal country inns. People would come from hot parts of the country – come up and stay several weeks. But Perry's family was sort of where it was north of the Swannanoa exit from I-40. Down on the highway there because Perry grew up right across from our farm.

PG: There was a camp called Swannanoa Camp also I found in our files that I was wondering about.

PC: Wasn't there one Merrimac – not Merrimac...

MP: Merri-something. Merriwood?

PC: That's one the way to Brevard.

PG: There's a number out near Brevard.

PC: And Elahe (?)

MP: And in Buncombe County there was one enormous boys camp.

PG: We do have good files on the camps. I didn't dig them all out because I was looking for your camp.

PC: Well Chunns Cove was interesting because it was pretty different in it's programs.

MP: Well it was small always, for one thing.

PC: And there was this contact through the years with the Alices keeping in touch with all those girls. She had special bases – she had a good group in Cleveland and a good group in Cincinnati. I went to a reunion – a Chunns Cove reunion in New Orleans.

PG: How many people were there?

PC: Oh five or six of us. *(laughter)* A pretty good average. Hy was down there.

PG: Was that still organized by the Alices?

PC: No that was organized by the Hackett family. That was an important family. You remember that name? The Hacketts had all these girls and we got together and talked the way we're talking today. What about our time?

PG: I think we're fine. Should we wrap it up?

MP: Let's wrap it up and then if we think of anything else really startling we'll preserve it in–

PC: And jot it down.

*(200)*PG: Well thank you so much. This really does help - we have pictures and Mary wrote out her recollections one time that we have in the files, but it's better to get the free remembrances.

MP: And Sarah Upchurch started working on it too because she went to -

PG: She had some notes too.

PC: I didn't know she had died – I knew her in AAUW.

PG: That wasn't too long ago.

MP: And Sarah I guess maybe would have been there between us. Maybe in the late twenties.

PG: I forget what dates she said she was there – she has some notes in our file.

MP: Sarah would be – she's about four or five years younger than I am.

PG: So you think the camp operated until the forties?

PC: I think it was about forty – Robin Cook tries to do it and it was a disaster. There was never anybody who could take the Alices place. Ever.

MP: Which probably is one of the built in problems with an institution that is so much personality because then –

PC: Those counselors came back year after year after year. You were used to having five or six counselors you knew from the year before.

PG: That would be nice. Well if you were going to spend eight weeks somewhere you'd hope you knew somebody.

PC: And you knew their personalities – boy Penda Major –

MP: I remember mostly just her name. In fact my basic memories are much vaguer – you've done a wonderful job of keeping it all together.

PG: She was the swimming instructor.

PC: All water sports. And when she said you do something, you do it right and you do it her way.

PG: Sounds like the whole camp was like that.

MP Well it really was somehow. I can't remember any rebels.

PC: You wouldn't dare.

MP: But in general everybody – people were amiable and we were reasonably happy.

PG: Well you were having fun. It sounds like loads of fun.

PC: We did have fun. And there was a lot of course that went on that we wouldn't know about.

MP: But then the other thing is, in 1924 and even in 1930 – little girls didn't have the alternative activities that people do now.

PC: That's right. Today they start in with ballet dancing at age three.

MP: Or ice skating or something.

PG: They're a little wilder too in their teenage years.

MP: It's really is a different world.

PG: It is different.

PC: That's right. But there are good things about this world.

(cross talk)

MP: And the same thing about mobility – you say they came and stayed for eight weeks, well their friends at home weren't running around in automobiles going from here to there all that time. The alternative would have been summer at home, on a street, no matter how happy and luxurious or what not in Cleveland or Cincinnati doing what you did all summer long –

PC: Playing kick the can.

PG: That's what I did.

PC: Did you do that? That's still a good thing.

PG: I don't know if they play it anymore.

PC: I think I've seen it on TV.

PG: I hope so, it was fun.

PC: Well I'll pick out the best of these for you.

PG: That you so much. That would be great. Ann Wright is in charge of our collection upstairs and Zoe Rhine so if I'm not here that could check them in for you anytime.

PC: Are we still on?

PC: I'll turn us off.

END OF TAPE